

## Army Corps of Engineers to close both Ballard Locks for salmon project

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SEATTLE – Both the large and small locks at the Hiram M. Chittenden Locks in Ballard will be closed to all marine traffic from 7 – 11 a.m. June 1. The closure will allow construction crews and dive teams to inspect the Adult Salmon Exclusion Structure.

In 2008, the Seattle District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which operates the locks, installed this interim structure at the entrance to the salt water return system located on the floor of the ship canal, adjacent to the large lock wall. The structure prevents salmon access to the return system and improves the viability of the various salmon runs, which use the fish ladder to return upstream to their spawning grounds.

Since 2004 some returning salmon, including the threatened Chinook, have become trapped, or entrained, in the system responsible for returning salt water to the Puget Sound side of the dam. The mortality rate of passing salmon due to entrainment has been increasing, though the reasons for this are unknown.

The Corps has consulted and partnered with the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Muckleshoot Indian Tribe to ensure the screening device is working properly to meet this year's salmon returns. The structure is expected to be in place for 3-5 years, allowing for selection and design of a permanent solution to the entrainment.

If work remains unfinished on June 1, the large and small locks also will close June 2 from 7 – 11 a.m. Construction crews and dive teams will make maximum efforts to complete the work as soon and as safely as possible.

Boaters may call the lockmaster on duty at 206-783-7000 to verify that the locks will be open June 2.

For current information about activities at the Locks, visit the Corps of Engineers Web site at [www.nws.usace.army.mil](http://www.nws.usace.army.mil) and select "Dams and Locks" then "Lake Washington Ship Canal" from the left column. The Chittenden Locks, often referred to as the Ballard or Government Locks, safely transit about 60,000 vessels each year.

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